

push through again. Madam Speaker, America's deficit problem relates directly to a lack of jobs—to vast pools of unemployed people, to Americans who want to work but who are losing hope. Unemployment translates into red ink and a lack of revenue. Until this Congress addresses unemployment, it won't solve the deficit problem.

America needs to address the causes, not the effects of America's economic predicament. When will this Congress address those causes?

THE OATH TO DEFEND THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GRAVES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues why we are here.

We are here to represent our constituents, and we are bound by an oath that we all took when we were sworn into office.

As each of us stood in this Chamber, we solemnly swore that we would support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that we would bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that we would take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that we would well and faithfully discharge the duties of this office in which we serve, so help us God.

□ 1130

Madam Speaker, there is a constituent of mine, Jack Smith. He is a defender of the Constitution and one of the strongest conservatives I know. Jack never fails to sound the alarm when Washington is off track when it comes to the Constitution—and I think we all know that comes quite often; it is very frequent.

So whether it's a foreign or domestic enemy of the Constitution, I stand committed to defend this document whenever and wherever I can. And today, in honor of Jack and the Ninth Congressional District, Liberty Council, and all my constituents, I urge the Members of this House, the Senate, and the Office of the President to reflect on your oath, to reflect on what you swore as you took that oath of office and the clear guidelines that it and the Constitution have bound us by, because the future of this great and glorious cause we call America depends on it.

SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, for a number of months now I have come to this floor to tell the stories of men and women in the military who have been raped by other soldiers. As heinous as those assaults are, the greatest injus-

tice is suffered after the assault when victims are doubted, debased, disrespected, and discharged from the military that they have so proudly enlisted in.

Last night, I had a long conversation with an Army and Navy veteran, Terri Odom, who told me she dreamed to serve in the military since she was a little girl. She was so determined that between her junior and senior summer she went to boot camp—not to some playground area somewhere in her community, but to boot camp. After high school, she went to Sicily with the Seabees. She told me that she had never been happier, serving her country, seeing the world, even swimming in the Mediterranean. It was like Terri was living a military recruiting commercial.

While there, she was befriended by an NCO 25 years her senior. He was a father figure to Terri, and she trusted him explicitly. When he volunteered to walk her home one night, Terri accepted the offer without hesitation. She told me that when he first grabbed her, she was more confused than scared. This is a young woman who was very proud of her service and had the utmost respect for her colleagues, particularly one who had such a distinguished career. This couldn't possibly be happening.

Terri's story is graphic. I only tell you the details so you can understand how horrific the response has been from our military.

Terri was raped repeatedly. Her abuser used pipes and other objects he found in her bathroom that was being remodeled. He cut her arms and vagina, then poured paint thinner into her wounds. He punched her with the full force of his 6-foot-4-inch, 270-pound frame. Terri, it should be noted, is 5 foot 3 inches. She fought back, even did some damage, but she was outmatched.

She woke up in a bathtub covered in blood. She was missing teeth and fingernails, yet her first thought was that she couldn't be late for duty. She also knew that she could get medical attention and file a criminal complaint at the base. Surely, the Navy would take care of her. It turns out she was wrong about that, as she was about her rapist.

Terri cleaned herself up, showered, showed up for duty, and reported the rape to her chain of command. She requested medical attention, but was told instead to take an aspirin and sleep it off. No one in Terri's chain of command allowed her to get medical attention. Instead, they told her to drop the rape story or her career would be over. Despite valiant efforts to stop it, Terri was eventually honorably discharged against her will, which is exactly what happens to 90 percent of military personnel who report rapes.

The Navy lost a good soldier that day. The Navy also kept a rapist—not officially, of course, because there was never an investigation. The reason? Because in the military, the authority to request one lies with the chain of com-

mand; but the chain of command is incentivized not to, because they are judged on how few instances of rape and other mishaps occur during their command. This is as true today as it was when Terri served. That is why Terri Odom has once again answered the call to service. She is here with me this morning to make sure her story is heard.

This Nation must aggressively pursue rape charges in our military. Sexual assault cases must be taken out of the chain of command and must never be punished by nonjudicial remedies like a mere demotion in rank. Finally, a uniform is not a get-out-of-jail-free card. Military sex offenders must be entered into the same national database as those in the civilian world.

Two decades ago, a young woman served proudly in the United States Navy and knew she was making the world a better place; then, a criminal and a criminally negligent system conspired to take it all away from her. But that young woman is back and she is not alone. Women and men from every branch of the military are speaking up. This is a problem we can fix. We only have to want to.

NO RAISING TAXES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I have listened to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talking about the need for us to get our economic house in order.

The President down at the White House is saying that we have to raise taxes because we have a revenue problem and we need to bring in more money. The fact of the matter is that this last year we had a 7 percent increase in taxes coming in. We had a 7 percent increase in taxes coming in even though we have the unemployment problems that we have. The problem was we spent 11 percent more than we took in.

So the problem we have right now is that the White House is spending too much money. We have to cut spending. We're bringing in more money than we did last year, last fiscal year, but we're spending way more than that. So we have a spending problem, not a taxing problem.

Now, they also said that we ought to tax the rich more. The fact is that the top 20 percent of wage earners in this country pay over 85 percent of the taxes. Now, if they raise that tax up, you're taking more money out of the people's pockets who can invest in companies, in business and industry that will create jobs and products that we can export around the world.

I don't understand why we can't get that point across very clearly to the American people. If we want to cure the unemployment problem, which is now 9.2 percent, what we have to do is get the private sector in a position

where they can create more jobs. That means we need to lower taxes, not raise them, like Ronald Reagan did. We need to cut government regulations, so that the private sector won't be strangled by the regulations in this country, and then let the free enterprise system work. If we do that, unemployment will go down; there will be more people working. Therefore, there will be more taxpayers paying into the treasury. Therefore, the deficit will go down and we won't have the economic problems we have today.

But raising taxes right now on any part of our society will only exacerbate the problem. And if the President has his way and we end up raising taxes—and I'm not going to vote for it—then what's going to happen is we're going to see unemployment get worse and worse and worse.

We've got to do what's economically correct, fiscally responsible, and that is to cut spending and to not raise taxes, especially in this climate. And if we do that and free up the free enterprise system, this country will get back on track very quickly.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 39 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask today that You bless the Members of this assembly to be the best and most faithful servants of the people they serve. Purify their intentions, that they will say what they believe and act consistent with their words.

May they be filled with gratitude at the opportunity they have to serve in this place. We thank You for the abilities they have been given to do their work, to contribute to the common good. May they use their talents as good stewards of Your many gifts and thereby be true servants of justice and partners in peace.

We thank You as well for this marvelous forum, where the important business of this Nation has been done in the past and is done today. May the work being done now be guided by Your Spirit.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CRAWFORD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

OFFICER BRYAN HEBERT, TEXAS LAWMAN

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend John Wesley Nero got into an argument with his mother and his grandmother. So, being a scoundrel, he beat them both up and then fled into the darkness of the night.

Local Beaumont, Texas, police officers confronted the outlaw to talk to him, but he fled away in his truck, and a high-speed chase occurred.

Meanwhile Officer Bryan Hebert—right here is a photograph of him—had positioned his vehicle ahead of the chase. He attempted to retrieve road spikes out of the trunk to stop Nero's vehicle. According to witnesses, when Nero spotted Hebert's car, Nero intentionally crashed into Hebert's patrol car, shoving the vehicle over Officer Hebert and killing him.

Officer Bryan Hebert, 36, was a 10-year veteran of the Beaumont, Texas, Police Department. John Wesley Nero is charged with capital murder.

Officer Hebert and police officers like him protect the rest of us from killers like Nero. They are the wall between the law and the lawless, the barrier between us and evildoers.

So today the badges of peace officers in southeast Texas are covered with the black cloth of sacrifice in honor of Officer Hebert, a lawman who sacrificed life to uphold the law.

And that's just the way it is.

PROTECTING SENIOR CITIZENS FROM THE RAID ON SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Social Security didn't create the deficit, but America's

seniors are being presented with a fake Social Security crisis to try to trick them into accepting reduced benefits.

Social Security will be able to pay 100 percent of its benefits through 2037 without any changes whatsoever. So why the panic today? If seniors accept cuts in Social Security benefits today, a surplus cash flow will build in the Social Security Trust Fund. According to CRS, "Social Security's cash surpluses are borrowed by the U.S. Treasury and can be used for tax cuts, spending, or repaying debt."

So here's what's going on: Social Security benefit cuts or an increase in taxes paid to Social Security or extending the retirement age will give the government more money for tax cut spending or repaying the debt, except for one thing: Social Security money belongs to those who have paid into the fund. It's not the government's money to use, and it shouldn't be the government's money to play with.

Senior citizens should not have to accept a reduced standard of living to finance tax cuts for the rich.

We must take a stand for senior citizens and protect Social Security and protect future generations from this raid on Social Security funds.

SUPPORTING INVESTMENT IN OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEVEE SYSTEM

(Mr. CRAWFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRAWFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of funding for the Army Corps of Engineers directed toward improving infrastructure and the damaged levee system that needs critical restoration after this historic season of flooding.

The unprecedented flooding along the Lower Mississippi River Valley area touched every part of the First District of Arkansas, my home district, and profoundly impacted our way of life. Homes and property were damaged, businesses were closed, and a vast amount of cropland was under water shortly after planting season had begun.

Preliminary estimates of crop damage across Arkansas has surpassed half a billion dollars, a huge toll on my district's agriculture-based economy. Farming is our way of life, and this bill provides farmers with the assurance necessary to reinvest in future production. Much of America's commodities are produced along the Mississippi Delta, and we must take the necessary steps to ensure our safe and reliable food supply is protected.

This vital investment in our Nation's infrastructure and levee system will provide security not only to our farmers but the families who live and work there as well as our consumers all across the country.